

**“ The Big Picture ”**  
**THE STATE OF THE STATE’S CHILDREN**

*Remarks by*  
**Hon. Cari DeSantis, Secretary**  
**Delaware Children’s Department**

*November 13, 2001*

*Embassy Suites*  
*Newark, Delaware*

**" The Big Picture "**  
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**Hon. Cari DeSantis, Secretary**  
**Delaware Children's Department**

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Thank you, Governor Minner.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to the children of our state. What greater legacy than to improve the future for generations to come.

For the past ten months, Governor, you have given me the distinct honor of serving at the helm of the Delaware Children's Department. It has been a fascinating journey. I have met so many dedicated, compassionate people working very hard to serve Delaware's children. Many of those people are in this room today.

As many of you know, I have always been active in this community. I have been working in health care and social services for many, many years. I thought I knew about the plight of some children in Delaware.

But, I can honestly tell you now that, I really did NOT know.

Judging by the response I get when I travel around the state talking about the children in our care, I am guessing that many of *you* do not really know the sad truths about some of Delaware's children either.

So, we have invited you here today to share with you the bigger picture about the state of the State's children.

We will review the numbers and the experiences of the children in our care. We will talk about the vision and mission of this department. We'll talk about *thinking of the child first* in all we do so that children are better served. . . so that their universal needs for safety, stability, self esteem and a sense of hope are met.

I will be frank with you. Governor Minner and I have invited you hear today to ask for your help. We believe in the ancient African wisdom that it takes a village to raise a child. That village is all of us....the family, the neighborhood, the community, the schools, our havens of faith, the business community, the Cari DeSantis's, the Ruth Ann Minners – the every single one of you sitting out there, and the thousands of caring adults throughout this great state.

So today, we will share...and we will ask:

We ask that you listen ...with your ears and with your hearts.

Think of the children in your life – and try to imagine them living such experiences as would bring them to our door. The statistics and stories you hear today may move you to tears, they

may make you angry, but more than anything, I hope they make your determined. Determined to make a change.

We ask that you recognize the value of our children – they are your neighbors, your students, your future workforce. They can be supported and move onto productive lives, or they can be left unattended to continue to drain resources with no return for the investment. That would be an unconscionable waste of human potential.

We ask, *unabashedly*, that you to step up to the plate...to do what you can ... in your sphere of influence...to help us help the children of Delaware who are the least known, least cared about, least hopeful in the state. They are our children....

They are OUR children.

According to the 2000 Census data, approximately 195,000 children under age of 18 reside in Delaware. The vast majority – 125,000 – live in New Castle County. Both Kent and Sussex Counties have about 35,000 each. Approximately 115,000 attend public schools. Over 42,000 attend child care centers licensed by the Delaware Children's Department.

Nearly 7% of Delaware's children annually suffer a crisis critical enough to land them at the door of the Children's Department . . . that's more than 13,000 children a year who experience far worse than we could ever imagine for any child.

On any given day, about 8,000 children are in the care and custody of the State of Delaware.

Roughly half of them suffered physical or sexual abuse or gross neglect. That's over 4,000 children .

Another 3,200 came to us through the court...the juvenile justice system.

And another 900 or so are receiving mental health treatment through our department.

That means, on a lovely day like today, when we are enjoying comfortable accommodations, the pleasure of civil company and intellectual stimulation, it means that thousands of children are struggling –

- they may not have enough food or clothes or supervision because of a parent's addiction;
- they may sport a black eye or broken arm delivered by their mother's boyfriend because they weren't quiet enough;
- they may suffer a shattering of trust by sexual abuse that translates into rage against adults, other children and themselves;
- their lives may be threatened by an addiction learned at home. In fact, we know that 80% of the children in our

care come from a home where one or both parents are addicted to alcohol or drugs.

In 1998, the number of children in State care was less than 7,000. By 2006, that number will exceed 9,000 – unless we take action.

Consider this:

The average age of children coming to us through the Division of Family Services – that is, through the abuse and neglect hotline – is age 9.

The average age of children served in our Division of Child Mental Health is 13.

The average age of youngsters in our juvenile justice system is 16.

Many of these children are the same children. We know them by name. We can track their lives from foster care, to behavioral challenges or substance abuse, to crime. In fact, we know that 47% of the nearly 2,000 youth who entered the juvenile justice system last year had received prior services from one or both of our other two divisions.

Unfortunately, many will also migrate right into the adult corrections system as well.

Not surprisingly, this pattern, this tracking deeper and deeper into trauma and trouble, suggests that somewhere, early in our

involvement with these children, we could be doing something different . . . something that could break the cycle, something that could end the death spiral deeper into the system.

So let's talk about the children who come to us earlier on.

Last year, we investigated nearly 6,000 reports of abuse and neglect. We substantiated 1,250:

- 51%, were substantiated for neglect
- 35% were substantiated for physical abuse
- another 14% were substantiated for sexual abuse.

At 51 % substantiated for neglect, that is more than 600 instances of neglect, including some so severe that children are, in fact, raising themselves ... and often their younger siblings as well... with little or no support or supervision.

We see 6,7,8... 10 year-olds who lack basic hygiene skills. They do not know how to brush their teeth, comb their hair, bathe or wash themselves properly.

These are children who have no clean clothes...who go to school in the same dirty, smelly clothes for days, clothes often inadequate for the weather.

We see children who are hungry... yes, right here in Delaware. There are, indeed, many children who are hungry every day.

We see children in dire need of dental or medical attention.

We see children whose parents do not care or do not even know if their children attend school regularly or not.

We all too often see children who have no one at home to care for them properly. Their parents are either in prison, wrapped up in their own addiction, unschooled in basic hygiene themselves, or otherwise unwilling or incapable of caring for their children.

And many times, it is hard to tell. Neglect is too easily hidden. We usually only see the worst cases.

The remaining 49% of substantiated cases are children suffering physical or sexual abuse by a family member or other person in the household. Some of these children are only months old.

**I**n the old school of thought, we used to think that little children didn't remember when no one came when they cried ... that they went hungry while parents were intoxicated, that they were screamed at and swatted and thrown against walls.

However, the brain research of the last decade reveals that, *indeed*, the brain remembers...the brain remembers the neglect and the terror even before the child has words ...and the brain malfunctions... malfunctions badly ...because of early abuse and neglect.

Some children are certainly more resilient than others. But many abused and neglected children get badly stuck. They get



behind emotionally. They get behind academically. They get behind socially. They suffer at home and then they suffer the rejection of their peers because they are so far behind in so many ways.

Child abuse and neglect does, indeed, have serious consequences for a lifetime.

Today, there are added challenges facing the children who land on our doorstep. We cannot underestimate the impact of:

- fetal alcohol syndrome,
- in utero exposure to heroin and other drugs,
- domestic violence – witnessed or experienced
- teen pregnancy
- malnutrition, and
- lack of nurturing from birth to age 5.

These conditions damage children in so many ways: physically, mentally, emotionally, intellectually and developmentally. These are burdens and scars that the children carry into their schoolrooms, their workplaces, their relationships, and their adult lives.

The children we see every day *clearly* are not the happy-go-lucky Tom Sawyers of old; not the cute red-headed Lil’ Orphan Annie who can win the heart of Daddy Warbucks with a song and a smile.

These children have little to smile about ... and little to hope for tomorrow.

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Think of your own coping skills. The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> have been traumatic for our nation as a whole. Each of us experienced a range of emotions – fear, sadness, anxiety, wakefulness, anger and despair. Yet most of us went into this national trauma with a lifetime of experience that most people are good, that most people can be trusted, that life...even with its hurts and disappointments...is exciting and rewarding. We have a context of hope and love to lean on in a difficult time.

The children we are talking about have a very different context. The parents who should have been their comforters and protectors are often their abusers and tormenters. For them, all trust is gone. All expectation of good is gone. Any sense of a self that is capable and worthwhile has been crushed. The coping skills they developed in an abusive or neglectful home serve them badly on any day, let alone a time of national crisis. And they live these emotions every day.

So what happens to these young children who suffer abuse?

For as many as 1,300 children last year, home was not a safe place to be until or unless the parent or parents could successfully resolve their problems. These children were placed in foster care.

About 25% of the children who come into foster care exit within the first six months. We are able to work with their biological parents to reunite the families to develop a safe and stable environment to minimize the risk of re-abuse or neglect.

Another 15% are generally reunited with their families within 7 months to a year.

The other 60% remain in foster care, a system that is currently insufficient to meet their needs.

Among these children is a small but significant number who cannot live in *family* foster homes.

Some of these children simply cannot stand the intimacy of a family... never having had a loving, nurturing or close relationship before.

Some require more supervision than a family can provide.

These children live in *group* foster homes.

Some children cannot safely be cared for in either a family foster home or a group home. They pose too much of a danger to *others*. They become violent. They set fires. They destroy property. They are sexual predators ... a result of the sexual abuse they experienced themselves, usually at a very young age.

Some children cannot safely be cared for in either a family foster home or a group home because they pose too much of a danger to *themselves*. They are so depressed that suicide is a real possibility. They feel such despair that their behaviors are incredibly risky and dangerous to themselves as well as others.

*These* children require intensive mental health treatment in psychiatric hospitals and residential treatment centers. They need medication to calm brains overwhelmed by trauma and stress.

And then there are those who exit the juvenile justice system and have nothing to go home to. The parent may not want them back. The parents may be jailed or homeless themselves. The parents may be wrapped up in their own dismal cycle of drug use, violence and crime. No matter how much these adolescents want a different life, their chances are slim once they return. Too often we see them back again.

No...Lil' Orphan Annie doesn't live here.

Yes... we have beautiful, precious children here...but you have to train your heart and your mind and your eyes to see the beautiful children under layers of pain. The children who live in our system didn't deserve what happened to them. Their problems and grief and angers and behaviors are not their fault.

*We* are charged with the care and with the healing of these young lives. It is an awesome and heavy responsibility...a responsibility we must meet.

**R**ecent Federal law requires that children who are not reunited with their families after two years be moved to permanency. For 248 children last year, it was determined that their families would never again be appropriate for them and parental rights were terminated. Some will be adopted; others may never find that "forever family" they so earnestly hope for. Especially if they are older than 10.

Last year, 106 children were adopted; that is a marked increase from only 36 adoptions two years ago. This is encouraging. It is a direct result of a cooperative effort among our staff, adoption agencies, and the Family Court to expedite adoptions.

Yet, the challenges remain for the nearly 200 children waiting for families today.

- The number of families interested in adopting our children is low.
- The number of families willing to adopt an older child is even lower.
- There are few adults willing to adopt a child who has already been in trouble with the law, no matter how well he or she fared in rehabilitation.
- There are NO families willing to adopt a pregnant teenager or a teen mom.

So these children remain in foster care, and we do the best we can for them.

And then they turn 18.

**I**n Delaware, over 50 kids a year age out of the foster care system. They are emancipated and on their own.

How many of us in this room have raised and nurtured a child to that age? How many of us would consider them sufficiently equipped to take on the world with no support?

Imagine the prospects for children coming out of our care.

In this past year, a unique partnership between West End Neighborhood House and the First State Community Action Agency with the Delaware Children's Department established an independent living program whereby at least some of these 18 year-olds do not have to be homeless and on their own. Unfortunately, we can only accommodate 17 of them today.

**M**eanwhile, we're working to improve the foster care system overall. I, along with other members of the Governor's Task Force on Foster Care, was more than encouraged by Governor Minner's leadership in bringing a focus to this critical area. She furthered her commitment by marshalling the resources, with the support of the General Assembly, to advance the first phase of recommended improvements in FY2002.

This includes recruitment, training, and appropriate supports for foster families. It also includes emergency homes where a child can be safe while his needs assessed and the best home placement found. This "First as Best" placement strategy will go a long way to minimize the trauma of multiple placements for the child...and will be a stabilizing force in that child's life.

But we have a long way to go.

The Children's Department budget proposal for FY2003 includes allocations of resources to continue to build our foster care system to one that minimizes the number of times a child, already traumatized by abuse, neglect and removal from their family, is placed. A system that includes foster families with the skills and support to handle today's more challenging children, a system that offers therapeutic group care for those who need it. A system that can begin to rebuild for the child a world that includes not only safety and stability, but that all important self-esteem and a sense of hope.

If we are not successful here, in improving the system where we see children at their youngest... if we are not successful in replacing our 1970s services with programs that meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century children... we will have failed in our most crucial responsibility... our responsibility to our kids.

But...if we invest in our foster care system...if we do foster care really well...I believe that we will be able to change the pattern of penetration deeper into the system and change the course of a lifetime for many of the children coming into care.

Besides, it is just the right thing to do.

**But**, okay. Altruism aside. Let's talk about the cost.

An adolescent in a Level 4 or 5 juvenile justice facility costs me nearly \$60,000. A child in a residential psychiatric treatment center can cost that and much more. Many of these kids come back a few times.

Foster care, however, even at its most enhanced, costs less than \$20,000 a year. Even if you wrap community based services, including probation officers, outpatient mental health, or other follow-along care around that foster child in the community, it is still far, far less than the costs on the other side of the locked door.

Remember, if we can really attend to the children and families early .. during their first encounter with us, perhaps we can prevent the need for further involvement...perhaps we can prevent the need for behavioral health treatment ... perhaps we can prevent the need for a jail cell.

So...

- it is the right thing to do.
- And it's cheaper to do now rather than later.
- But *who* can even begin to calculate the loss of human potential if we lose these kids? ... Who can put a value on the



scientist, the poet or the genius we throw away if we do not invest in these children today?

The Delaware Children’s Department has an annual budget of approximately \$140 million dollars. About \$90 million is appropriated from the state’s general revenues. We spend about \$45 million dollars on contracted services. Most of it in residential care.

It is important to share with you this:

About 70% of our resources are consumed by less than 20% of our children....those in out-of-home placements, in residential care.

We know that some of our children in the very deep-end residential care, like psychiatric hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, and residential treatment centers could be better served in less restrictive settings – say, in day treatment or transitional programs, or in foster care with community-based services wrapped around the child and the foster family. Some may need a small group home, a step-down program, or a specialized foster family.

But we cannot offer that – not yet.

Because right now, there are gaps in our system of care ... our menu of options is not yet developed enough to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century children.

Right now, 152 teenagers who have come to us through the judicial process are in juvenile rehabilitation facilities outside of Delaware – some as far away as South Dakota. Why? Because we simply do not have the capacity in-state to accommodate them.

In FY 2001, 47% of youth released from Level 4 residential placement were rearrested within 12 months for another felony charge.

Now, we know that out-of-state placements create barriers to working with families while the children are with us, so there might be better success for the child when he or she goes back home. Yet, today, we have no alternatives but to send these kids away.

The same is true for the 40 or more teens who are in specialized out-of-state centers for mental health or substance abuse treatment. Although the treatment and recovery may be successful, the transition back to home often is not. And then they come back.

Perhaps it is time to think about the wisdom of all this. Is “out of sight / out of mind” in the best interest of these kids? Could we do more to improve their prospects if we could serve them right here in Delaware?

And what about the 82% of the children in our care who live at home? Beyond the family treatment services we provide, these families and children need support – they need the Village. They need after-school programs, mentoring, life and job skills

assistance. They need diversions and community support to keep them steady, stable, and healing...and NOT moving deeper into the system.

As I have uncovered the sad truths and looked at the bigger picture surrounding our children, I have encouraged our staff and providers to

**"Think of the child first."**

This is where it all starts.

If we always *think of the child first*...stay focused on the child...what is in the best interest of the child...the rest becomes quite clear.

\_\_\_\_ Now, it occurs to me that you may be interested in what we at the Delaware Children's Department are doing differently to Think of the Child First and to return safety, stability, self-esteem and a sense of hope to these most troubled children.

Well, upon taking office, Governor Minner set us in motion.

- first by issuing an executive order very early in her administration declaring safety of children in state care as a top priority;

- then by creating a task force charged with enhancing the state's foster care system, and
- then, by exempting our department from the current requirement on all other state agencies to develop budget cuts.

This is true leadership and commitment to the children of this state that, I know, has been well appreciated by most of you in this room.

At the Children's Department, with the Governor's blessing, we have been working very hard these last ten months looking at how we operate this "business of caring" and implementing changes in the way we do the business:

The first thing we did was to initiate a series of "opportunity reviews" to identify opportunities to maximize our human and fiscal resources to meet the needs of today's kids. Details on this process are also in your packet, so I won't enumerate them. They are simply the application of sound, data-driven business management practices to the *business of caring*, practices that will help us to be good stewards of our resources. Many of these efforts have already produced tangible results.

I have been warned about focusing too much on the dollars. 'They'll think you don't care about the kids,' I've been told.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The way I see it, every dollar wasted on excess or inefficiency is a dollar that could be applied to the development of services we need *today*.

As part of our reviews, we began looking at *how* we deliver services and how we might re-engineer to produce better results.

And one more thing, when we talk about effective results, we have to be willing to be accountable for *improving* the lives of our kids, not just maintaining them while they are here. We have to count, not the number of kids who *participate* in a program, but the number of kids who *succeed in the long run*. THAT is where success really lies.

At the Children's Department, we have refocused on our core mission to provide leadership and advocacy for Delaware's children, keeping in mind our primary responsibility to provide and manage a range of services for children who have experienced abandonment, abuse, adjudication, mental illness, neglect, or substance abuse. We believe we can only do this with a holistic approach to enable children to reach their fullest potential.

And we have envisioned a future when all staff and partners "Think of the child first."

To do this, we have focused cross-divisional teams of line workers and management on five key strategic initiatives, developed in concert with our staff and with input from my conversations with other stakeholders. These are areas of priority and focus driving this department forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These initiatives are in your packet, however, I'd like to mention them here as well.

The first is a major undertaking; i.e., **developing and implementing a statewide system of care** that meets the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century children.

1. Secondly, we are developing and hope to implement next year a **uniform intake and assessment** process across the department, so that no matter through what door the children enter our care, their needs and strengths will be assessed and an individualized plan of service will be created.
2. We know we cannot do all our work alone. We will be working very hard to **enhance partnerships** with the community to provide a network of formal and informal private and public services to rally around the children and work collaboratively to fill gaps in services and resources. This program today is the first step toward building those partnerships.
3. We know, too, that we need to improve our own internal **organizational health and communications** in order to foster an environment of cooperation and teamwork around our kids.
4. And we will demand **excellence in fiscal management** to maximize the financial resources and assure that dollars are spent wisely and in service to the kids.

To really change the way we do what we do, we have to take some bold new steps. These strategic initiatives will set us on the right road.

**I**n addition, we are already implementing changes in foster care, starting with:

- Low and no cost "fixes" identified in our task force deliberations;
- Preparing our internal structure and organizational capability; and
- Dedicating the resources needed this year to begin implementing the new Delaware Foster Care Model. This model is a shining example of the collaboration of many people working very hard to make change happen in a short amount of time.

And it did.

When the recommendations of the task force on foster care are fully implemented, I believe this state's foster care system will be a model for the nation... a true legacy....a legacy of caring that will improve the lives of today's children and their children and their children for generations to come.

**I**t is time we recognize that we can no longer serve 21<sup>st</sup> century kids in a 1970's child welfare system. Their needs are different; therefore, our system of care must be different. We must take children's services to a new level, with new ideas, new

partnerships, and a new vision for caring for our children today...and tomorrow.

Delaware is in a unique position to help its most fragile children. We are a small and friendly state, where collaboration, cooperation and communication can lead to real results. Our children depend on us, the adults who care about them. We need all of us working together to help them be safe, live in a stable home, learn self-esteem and reach their fullest potentials with a true sense of hope about the future.

Despite the alarming statistics and the sad nature of our business, there is hope. It is in the dedicated staff, foster and adoptive parents, contracted caregivers, volunteers, mentors, and community partners who have already joined with us over the years in nurturing and helping our kids.

And it is in you – in your commitment of time today and in your commitment of resources for tomorrow.

We, at the Delaware Children's Department are focused and forging ahead. As we forge ahead into this new century, we invite you, our friends in the corporate, ecumenical, philanthropic and non-profit communities to come with us as partners, to create that cohesive village that will raise our children.

We simply cannot do it alone.

I sense the energy around this – I saw it when many of you came to our budget presentation last week in support of our efforts.



And there is one thing I know for sure: Delawareans rise to the occasion when asked.... and give generously of their time, talents and treasures when needed.

So I stand before you today unabashedly asking on behalf of the thousands of children in our state who cannot ask for themselves. We are here to issue a "call for arms"....arms that can be wrapped around the children who need a hug....and so, so much more.

In this room are legislators, religious leaders, executives in the business and non-profit communities, educators, grant makers, service providers, and child advocates. You are Delaware's influential movers and shakers.

We brought you together in one room here today in the hope that we could get you to think outside of your usual boxes and ponder the possibilities of innovative collaboration.

What if churches or schools ran Al-a-Tot or Al-a-Teen programs to help young children deal with the emotional ravages of parental addiction?

What if local businesses teamed up with non-profits to offer school-based programming to help teens without support at home to find and fulfill a dream?

What if foundations or corporate grant makers provided start-up capital and the state provided operating funds for not-for-profit contractors to offer diversionary or step-down transitional housing

for pre-teens and adolescents stabilized but with no real home to go back to?

What if every one of the 8,000 children in our care had a mentor ... a friend ... a caring, consistent adult who would stick it out with them and offer stability in the frightening, crazy world they live in?

What if.....? You fill in the blank.

What if ... every one of the 150 people in this audience today committed to doing something – something specific and meaningful – within the next 12 months to make a difference for these kids. Think of what that could mean.

Before you leave here today, think about what you can do for the children of Delaware.

If you are so inclined, I kindly urge you to fill out the commitment card in your packet. Tell us what you might be able to do ... you, individually, or you as a representative of your agency. Tell us about your areas of interest. We will use that information to bring together people with common interests and shared vision. We will use that information to begin to rebuild the Village that will help us raise the children most in need.

*And we hope that no matter what you do, you will always..*

**Think of the child first.**

The rest of the picture will become quite clear. Thank you.

# THE BIG PICTURE

THE STATE OF THE STATE'S CHILDREN

The late 1970s brought significant emphasis on and change around how the nation deals with children who are abandoned, abused, neglected, or otherwise left in the care of the state. New federal laws passed in the late 1990s set the stage for the next phase of development of the child welfare system. Now it is time to take child welfare to a new plane in Delaware — we can no longer serve 21st century children in a 1970s child welfare system. Learn what changes are in the works at the Delaware Children's Department, what private agencies are doing, where the service gaps are, what community partnership really means, and what you can do to help Delaware's most vulnerable children succeed in a changing, challenging world.

**8:00 am — 8:30 am**

Registration (continental breakfast)

**8:30 am — 9:00 am**

*Welcome & Introduction*

Governor Ruth Ann Minner

State of Delaware

**9:00 am — 9:30 am**

*State of the State's Children*

Secretary Cari DeSantis

Delaware Children's Department

**9:30 am — 10:00 am**

*A National Perspective*

John VanDenBerg, President, Vroon VanDenBerg, Inc.

**10:15 am — 11:15 am**

Panel Sessions

**11:15 am — 11:45 am**

Closing Session

**12:00 PM — 1:00 PM**

Lunch & Speaker (TBD)

## SESSION A:

**Lil' Orphan Annie Doesn't Live Here Anymore**

*Moderator: Carlyse Giddins, Director of Family Services,  
Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families*

### Panelists:

The Honorable William Chapman, Family Court Judge

The Honorable James L. Hutchison, Mayor of Dover

Sylvia Dorsey, Foster Parent & Former Chair, Governor's Task Force on Foster Care

Mary Lou Edgar, Director of Adoption Services,  
Adoption Services of Delaware Tressler Center

Marc Richmond, PhD., Clinical Psychologist

## SESSION B

**Today's Twist on Oliver: Juvenile Justice in a World of Drugs and Violence**

*Moderator: The Honorable Vincent J. Poppiti, Chief Judge, Family Court*

### Panelists:

The Honorable Charles H. Toliver IV, Superior Court Judge

Carl Schnee Esq., Chairman for Ferris Arts Committee

Timothy J. Brandau, PhD., Executive Director, YMCA of Delaware Resource Center

Dianne Gadow, Superintendent, Ferris School for Boys

Darryl Dawson, Administrator, New Castle County Detention Center

## SESSION C

**Alice Inside the Looking Glass: Beyond Safety & Stability**

*Moderator: Nancy Wilson, PhD., Associate Secretary of Curriculum and  
Instructional Improvement, Department of Education*

### Panelists:

Paul Calistro, Executive Director, West End Neighborhood House

Tania Culley, Esq., Office of the Child Advocate, State of Delaware

Marc Felizzi, School Psychologist

Dwight F. Holden, Probation and Parole Officer,  
Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families

Grace Pesikay, LCSW, CADC, Clinical Supervisor, Phoenix Mental Health Services

Scott Rosas, Office of Prevention and Early Intervention,  
Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families



State of Delaware  
The Department of Services  
for Children, Youth and  
Their Families

Governor Ruth Ann Minner  
&  
Secretary Cari DeSantis  
Delaware Children's Department

## Executive Summit

# THE BIG PICTURE

THE STATE OF THE STATE'S CHILDREN



**Tuesday, November 13th, 2001**

Embassy Suites Hotel  
Newark, Delaware

8:30 am – 1:00 pm

Executive Summit

# THE BIG PICTURE

THE STATE OF THE STATE'S CHILDREN



## SESSION A:

### Lil' Orphan Annie Doesn't Live Here Anymore

Moderator: Carlyse Giddins, Director of Family Services, Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

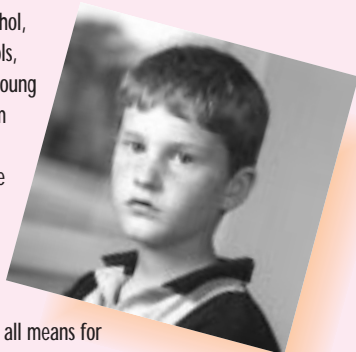
That cute little curly-haired red-head won our hearts in the comics and on screen, but the reality of today's abandoned, neglected, and orphaned children couldn't be further from that celluloid cherub. Although their dreams are the same — for a safe, stable and loving family — today's children struggle with serious emotional, mental, and developmental problems resulting from an abysmal homelife and manifesting in challenging behaviors that belie the Orphan Annie image. Hear what the experts have to say about the changing nature of children in the care and custody of the State and about the growing gap in foster family and group care and residential treatment for children. Learn what you can do in the community to help these children heal and realize their dreams.

## SESSION B:

### Today's Twist on Oliver: Juvenile Justice in a World of Drugs & Violence

Moderator: The Honorable Vincent Poppiti, Chief Judge Family Court

Picking pockets and petty thefts were a means to food and shelter for 19th century London's poor and unattended children like Oliver and friends. Today, drugs, alcohol, and violence — in the home, in the schools, and in the neighborhoods — lead more young people to the state's juvenile justice system than ever before. The detention centers bulge at twice their capacity; the courts are overburdened; keeping children on the right track is getting harder and harder; recidivism keeps climbing. Learn what state and private agencies know about juveniles in the justice system, and what it all means for communities, for corporations, for the future.

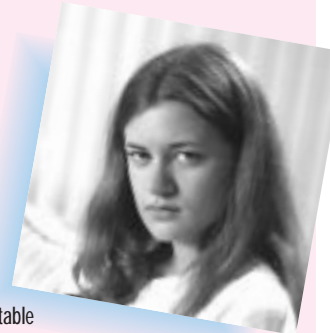


## SESSION C:

### Alice Through the Looking Glass: Beyond Safety & Stability

Moderator: Nancy Wilson, PhD., Associate Secretary of Curriculum and Instructional Improvement, Department of Education

A safe place to live and a nurturing, stable homelife are only the beginning of the challenges facing many of Delaware's children. Even many children who are not in the custody of the state live with the effects of in utero drug and alcohol use, lack of nurturing in the first five years of life, domestic violence, child abuse, gross neglect, and fear in the home and in the neighborhood. Separation anxiety and grief over loss of family life are real issues our children carry into their school lives and into their adult lives. Add in the prevalence of ADHD, learning disabilities, emotional and developmental impairments, and the potential for good self-esteem for many children is dim. Hear what the experts have to say about the burgeoning gap in child well-being in Delaware, and the importance of self-esteem and a sense of hope for the future. Learn what every community can do beyond assuring safety and stability for all Delaware children.



Contact: [abenjamin@state.de.us](mailto:abenjamin@state.de.us) or call 302-633-2505

Executive Summit

# THE BIG PICTURE

THE STATE OF THE STATE'S CHILDREN

Tuesday, November 13th, 2001

8:30 am — 1:00 pm

Embassy Suites Hotel  
Newark, DE

Reserve early, seating is limited.

Please R.S.V.P. by November 1st

Executive Summit

# THE BIG PICTURE

THE STATE OF THE STATE'S CHILDREN

## TWO EASY WAYS TO REGISTER

By Fax: 302-995-8290

By Mail: DSCYF Executive Summit  
Attn: Amy Benjamin  
1825 Faulkland Road  
Wilmington, DE 19805

Whatever your method of registration, be sure to enroll right away since space is limited.

Please R.S.V.P. by November 1st

NAME			
COMPANY			
MAILING ADDRESS			
CITY	COUNTY	STATE	ZIP
TELEPHONE		EXT.	
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EMAIL			

## SESSION PREFERENCES

First Choice:	<input type="checkbox"/> SESSION A	<input type="checkbox"/> SESSION B	<input type="checkbox"/> SESSION C
Second Choice:	<input type="checkbox"/> SESSION A	<input type="checkbox"/> SESSION B	<input type="checkbox"/> SESSION C
Third Choice:	<input type="checkbox"/> SESSION A	<input type="checkbox"/> SESSION B	<input type="checkbox"/> SESSION C

CANCELLATIONS: If you find that you are not able to attend after you register please call or email Amy so that space can be made for others.

Contact: Amy Benjamin  
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